

Swiss Alpenhorns at Casa Perico

January 31, 2017 by Jody Aston, Editor and Publisher

International Trivia participants were treated to a special, impromptu concert after their quiz game last Thursday. A group of Swiss Alpenhorn players were touring the Rio Dulce, and quite naturally, ended up at the Swiss-owned Hotel Casa Perico, the venue for Trivia that night.

The organizer, a Swiss expat now living in Guatemala, said it is not a professional group and they had only played together a few times in the last week. The members met online and he invited them to Guatemala. He joked that traveling from Europe to Guatemala is hard enough, but imagine bringing an alpenhorn along with you on the flight! If you're curious how they did it, the darker horns (made of carbon fiber) break apart into several pieces, to about 2 1/2 feet, and fit into a case for transport. The more traditional wooden horns are made of mountain spruce, from the Swiss Alps. As the spruces grow on the steep hillsides, natural forces create a curvature at the base. After the trees are cut in half, hollowed out and smoothed, the halves are glued and wrapped tightly together with birch rattan. (Story continued and more photos below - click "Read more...").

In spite of having little practice playing together, the concert was delightful. Few had heard the musical instruments before, except, of course, in the Ricola cough drop television commercials! All agreed that the music produced by the alpenhorns had a slow, soothing quality. They only play 12 natural tones, so musical variety is mostly limited to songs written especially for the instrument. One of the group, however, demonstrated, quite beautifully, that "Amazing Grace" is one of the few familiar songs that has the correct tones to be played.

We left Casa Perico feeling lucky to have had the unexpected musical experience. If you would like to hear one of the songs played, copy and paste this YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FBE-qwnM70>

Bet you didn't make it through the whole article without saying, "Riiiiicolaaaaaa" at least once!

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